1:Indiana U. S-4, 5(1954-5)1955 RG4 Estonia RG4

Annex "A," Subparagraph 1f,

Sociological Background

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

565 555 The Republic of Estonia always impressed her foreign visitors as being an almost classless country. Although this was not strictly true, the class lines which did exist were not rigid and there were extensive possibilities for vertical mobility within the society. Creative and educational abilities determined social status to a greater extent than did financial well-being.

563 After the big estates belonging to the German gentry and a few wealthy Estonians were redistributed among the landless people, the German landholders returned to Germany or else settled down in Estonian cities. Very few of the estate owners remained in the country, and the few who remained did so because they had been

565 business and industrial magnates, 2) the middle class, comprising teachers, clerks, military officers, independent educated farmers, writers, artists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc., 3) the workers, who in turn are divided into skilled and unskilled workers. The businessmen who became rich overnight in the years previous to or immediately following World War I were not considered as belonging to the higher classes. Eduard Vilde has written a character study of a member of the nouveau riches in his famous [875] comedy Pisuhänd. On the other hand, university professors enjoyed a high social position; they belonged to the upper middle class even though their salaries were not princely.

The middle class was by far the biggest class. 555 As in any democratic society, social mobility between the classes was extensive, and Estonian

555 society was constantly in transition. Quite often the parents belonged to the working class but their educated children had climbed several steps up the social ladder.

565 665 The workers' class and the intellectuals at loose ends in the cities usually made up the majority of left-wing groups. The majority of the middle class in the cities belonged to the liberal parties, and the old established farmers formed the right-wing. The new small-holders, created by the land reform, and the old farmers at first belonged to separate parties, but they later merged into one big Agrarian Party which became quite influential in the political life of Estonia (see Subparagraph 2c, POLITICAL DYNAMICS).[1]

565 186 In a national emergency, class distinctions have always been forgotten and the nation has

1 [see cat. 116, pp. 325--120-334-- Analyst]